I H

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¶ Of Gentylnes and Nobylyte.

A dyaloge betwen the Marchaut the knyght and the plowman dysputyng who is a verey Gentylman & who is a Noble man and how men shuld come to auctoryte / compilid in maner of an enterlude with dyvers toys & gestis addyd therto to make mery pastyme and disport.

The marchaunt

O what a gret welth and prosperyte
It is to any reme where marchauntes be
Hauing fre lyberte and entercours also
All marchaundyse to coũey to and fro
Whych thyng I haue vsed and the verey fet found
And therby gotton many a thousand pownd
Wherfore now be cause of my grete ryches
Thoroughowt this land in euery place doubtles
I am magnyfyed and gretly regardyd
And for a wyse and noble man estemyd

The knyght

Maister marchaunt I here you ryght well
But now in presumpcion me thynk ye excell
To call yourself noble in presence here
I wys men know what your auncestours were
And of what grete stock descendid ye be
Your fadyr was but a blacke smyth perde

March. ¶ Why syr what than what be you I pray you
Knyght ¶ Mary I am a gentylman I wold ye know
And may dispend yerely v. C. mark land
And I am sure all that ye haue in hand
Of yerely rent is not worth v. markys

M ¶ But I wold thou knewist for all thy krakkys
I am able to bye now all the land
That thou hast and pay for it out of hand

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Which I haue got by myn own labour and wit
K ¶ Yet art thou but a chorle and I haue a skorn
Thou shuldist cōpare with me a gentylman born
M ¶ Why what callyst thou a gentylman tel me
K ¶ Mary I call them gentylmen that be
Born to grete landys by inheritaunce
As myn auncestours by cōtynuaunce
Haue had this .v.C. yere of whom now I
Am descendid and commyn lynyally
Beryng the same name and armys also
That they bare this .v.C. yere ago
Myn auncestours also haue euer be
Lordys knyghtes and in grete auctorite
Capteyns in the warr and gouernerys
And also in tyme of peas gret rulers
And thyn were neuer but artyficerys
As smythe masone carpentars or weuars
M ¶ All that is trewth I wyl not denye now
Yet I am more gentylman born than thou
For I call hym a gentylman that gentilly
Doth gyf unto other men louyngly
Such thing as he hath of hys own pper
But he that takith ought away from a nother
And doth gyf hym no thyng agayn therfore
Owght to be callyd a chorle euermore
But myn auncestours haue gifyn alwey
To thyn auncestours such thyng as they
By their labours did trewly get and wyn
For myn auncestours bildid howsis wherein
Thyne auncestours haue had their dwellyng place
Also myn auncestours haue made tolis
To all maner craftī men belongyng
Wherby clothis and euery other thyng
Where of thyn auncestours nede haue had
With the same tolys haue euer be made
So myn auncestours haue gyfin their labours
Euer to cōfort and help thyn auncestours
K ¶ I deny that euer thauncestours of thyne
Did euer gif to the auncestours of myne
At any tyme any thyng except that they
Gate some what therfor other waye or money
M ¶ Mary god a mercy John for that now
That is euyn a pyg of our own sow

How can lordys & estatis haue ought in store
Except thartyfycers do get it before
For all metalls be dyggyd furst by myners
And after wrought by the artyfycers
woll fell and euery other thyng
That is necessary to mannys couerying
And all other thyngis that men vse & were
Is al wey made by the artyfycer
I graunt that the artyfycers do make it
But be cause comenly they haue lytell wyt
Gentylmen that haue landys & dominyon
Of all such ryches haue most possessyon
For reason wyll euer it shuld so be
wyse men to haue folys in captyuyte
Mary as for wyt & subtell inuencyon
Myne auncestours wyth thine may make cõpison
For though my fader were a smyth what than
yet was he a meruelous quyk wyttyd man
And coud work as well for hys pt
As any in this land lyng that art
And deuyse new fassyons in thynges that he made
That euery man to bye hys ware was glad
And carue & graue in yron & stele
Both Image & letters meruelously wele
And ther on ley gold & gylt it also
Fyne & pure as any gold smyth coud do
My graunfader also was a mason
Of grete wyt as any in thys regyon
And coud byld a castell & tour ryght well
In whych some of thy kynnysmen now do dwell
where in aper yth ryght good masonry
wyth Jumnagys & armys wrought curyously
My grete graundfadyr lo was a weuer
Of wollyn yarn & of other gere
And made meruelous pleasaunt workis to be hold
Lynyn dyap sylk & cloth of gold
All such subtell thyngis as I haue reherssyd lo-
Myne auncestours by theyr wyttis coud work & do
And as for thyne auncestours I know no thyng
Thei coud do bi their wittis worth of praisyng
But vse occupi & waste euer more
Such thyngis as myn auncestours made before
And thou & thise auncestours hauing thoccupacion
Of such thyngis wrought bi the ygnorion

Of other men oughtist not be prayſed therfore
But the prayſe ought to be gyuen euer more
To the artyfycer whych by hys wyt
It deuyſyd and ſo cõyngly wrought it
wherefore yf thou ſey that wyt & poleſy
Be the thyng(perteynyng to gentry
Thyn auncestours may neuer cõparewyth mine
For theyr act(proue them wyſer than thyne
For thyn dyd neuer no thyng in theyr days
Concernyng quyk wyt that was worthy prays
yes I wis lewd Jauell I wold thou knewiſt it
Wyn auncestours haue had more wyſedome & wyt
Than thyne haue had & coud do alſo
Many thynges that thyne coud neuer do
For in the contrey at ſeſſyons and ſyſe
They haue be electe to be Juſtyce
And for theyer wyt and grete dyſcreſſyon
They haue Juggyd and donne correccyon
Vppon thyne auncestours artyfycers
That haue made falſe warys & ben dyſſeyuers
And holpe for to maynteyn euery thynge
That ys to the comyn welth pteynyng
They haue ben alſo in tyme of warr
Both in thys land & other coutreys farr
Dukys & leders of the hole army
And by theire wyttis & warly polycy
Study forecaſt & dilygent trauayle
Haue won many a grete fyld & batayle
And thyne auncestours that were there
were neuer able to bere ſhyld noz ſpere
And were neuer but ſoldyars & pyoners
Noz neuer had wyſdome to be rulers
But becauſe myn auncestours haue euer be
Dyſcrete & wyſe they haue had auctoryte
Nay nay thyne auncestours cam neuer all
To auctoryte for wyſdome pncypall
For though ſõe were wiſe yet ſome of thẽ agayn
Had ſmall diſcreſſion lytyll wyt oz brayn
But becauſe of the long cõtynuannce
Of theyr grete poſſeſſions by enherytaunce
By the folyſh maner of the worlde we ſee
For that cauſe euer they haue had auctorite
And I ſay that good reaſon agreth to it
For though the fader haue no grete wyt

The sone that is wyse shuld neuer the more
Lose hys land or auctoryte therfore
For he that by study dylygens & payn
Grete landys or possessyons doth attayn
Hys owne lyfe is to shorte & to lyte
For to take the frute of his meryte
Reason wolde therfore that after hys lyfe
Hys heyrs before straungers haue p̄rogatyfe
And the cōtynuaunce of such possessyons
Wakyth noble men & gentyll condycyons
And they whos blode hath long contynued
As gentylmen so they shuld be honoured
And so myn auncestours long tyme haue be
Grete possyssyoners and in auctoryte
Therfore consyderyng my grete lynage
Wy blode my noble byrth and parentage
Thou art not able to compare w̄ me
Nother in gentylnes nor in nobylyte

Here the plouman cōmith in with a short whyp in hys hand & spekyth as folowith

Plow. Now here is bybbyll babbyll clytter clatter
I hard neuer of so folysh a matter
But by goddys body to speke the troth
I am better than other of you bothe

A Auaunt kankerde chorle fro whens cōmyst thou

P Wary folysh peuysh daw euen fro my plow
How sayst woldyst any thyng therewall

W ye mary thou lewyd byllayn & rud rascall
It is for the full yll beseemyng
To yturb any gentylmens talkyng

P Gentylmen ye gentylmen Jak hetyng
Put your shone in your bosome for wetyng
I accompt my self by goddys body
Better than you bothe and more worthy

A Auaunt knaue get the out of the gate
Or I shall lay my sworde on thy pate

P That shall I proue I make god auow
Neuer in better tyme haue at the now

Et verberat eos

W Now holde thy hand felow I the pray
And harkyn what I shall to the say

P Sey knaue say what canst sey

W Holde thy hand I pray the & com no nare
I am a marchaunt & no man of ware

R Thou art not honest I tell the playnly
To make any quarrel here so sodaynly
To pturb our cõmunycacyon
P Here ye may se syrs by goddys passyon
Two proude kolys make a crakkyng
And when it cõmyth to poynt dare do no thyng
M Our cõmyng hyder & our entent
ys not to fyght but by way of argument
Euery man to shew hys oppinyon
To see who coude shew the best reason
To proue hym self noble & most gentylman
P By god all the reasons syth ye began
That ye haue made therof be not worth a fly
R No syr I pray the than tell me why
P Furst as touchyng noblenes I say
Ther is nother of you both dyd pue or say
Ony of your actys wherby that ye
Shulde in reason pue you noble to be
Or therby deserue any maner prayseyng
But all the effect of your arguyng
To proue your noblenes was but only
Of the deddys & actes of your auncestry
And of the actes that your auncestours dyd before
ye ar the nobler neuer the more
R As touchyng my self I dare make compison
Of as noble dedys as he hath any done
For I am & haue ben one of the chyualry
At the cõmaundement of my prynce euer redy
And euery tyme of warr haue be captayn
And leder of a .M. men or twayne
And w̃ hors & harnes spere and sheld
Haue Jopdyd my body in euery felde
The rentes of my landys haue spende lyberally
And kept a grete house contynually
And holp to ponysh theuys & brybers alwey
To the grete tranquylyte of my contray
And you maister marchaũt wyl neuer take labour
Except it be for your pfet and lucoure
Plow. Go to go to now master marchaunt
There is a reason that gryeth you a taunt
I trow more than you can answere well
M Nay I wys pyuysh & rude Jak Jauell
I can make an answere so substancyally
wher to nother of you is able to reply

If thou canst answere my reason do
That can I well doo. P. Then go to fole go to
I say the comyn well of euery land
In fete of marcheauntdyse doth prncypally stand
For if oure cõmoditees be vttcryd for nought
In to strange landis and no ryches brought
Hydyr therfore / we shuld come to beggary
And all men dryfkyn to lyf in mysery
Thẽ we noble marchauntis that in this reame be
what a grete welth to thys land do we
we vtter our warys & by theyrs good chepe
And bryng them hyder that grete pfet
And pleasure dayly cõmyth to this regyon
Too all maner people that here do won
Forthermore ye see well w̃ youre eyes
That of straynge landis the cõmodytees
we haue such nede of them that be there
That in no wyse we may them forbere
As oyle sylkis frutis & spyces also
Golde syluer pryn & other metallis moo
All drãmys & druggys longyng to physyke
whych men must nedes haue when they be seke
whych in thys reame can not well grow
Our cõtrey is to colde & not hote I now
w̃ out whych thyngis we shulde lyfe in mysery
And oft tymes for lak of them we shulde dye
And I spende my studi & labour contynually
And cause such thyngis to come hyder dayly
For the comfort of thys land & cõmen welth
And to all the people grete pfet & helth
And for such noble dedys reason wyll than
That I ought to be callyd a noble man
And nother of you both that here now be
In noblenes may accompare w̃ me
P Now well hit by goddes body well hit
Of one that hath but lytyll wyt
Answere me one worde furst I pray the
what is the noblest thynge that can be
R what saist thou therto thi self let see
P Is not ỳ the noblyst thyng in dede
That of all other thyngis hath lest nede
As god which reynith etern in blysse
Is not he the noblest thyng ỳ is
R yes mary no man in reason can that deny

P Cwell than there is no reason therof why
But because he is the thyng omnipotent
And is in him self so suffycyent
And nedyth the helpe of no nothyr thyng
To the helpe of hys gloryous beyng
But euery other thyng hath nede of his ayde
M Mary that is very trough & well sayde
P And lyke wyse ỹ thynge that hath most nede
Is the thyng that is most wreched
So suffycyency is euer noblenes
And necessyte is euer wrechydnes
And he that hath more nede of that thyng
For the p̃ seruacyon of hys lyuyng
Then his felow hath his felow must nedꝭ be
By thys same reason more noble than he
R what than. P. by the same reason it puith lo
ye be but caytyffꝭ & wrechis both two
And by the same reason pue I shall
That I am the noblyst man of vs all
For I haue nede of no maner thyng
That ye can do to help of my lyffyng
For euery thyng whereby ye do lyf
I norysh it & to you both do gyf
I plow I tyll & I ster the ground
wherby I make the corn to habounde
whereof ther is made both drynk & bred
wyth the which dayly ye must nedis be fed
I norysh the catell & fowlys also
Fysh & herbis & other thyngis mo
Fell herr & woll whych the bestis do bere
I norysh & preserue which ye do were
which yf ye had not no dowt ye shuld
Starue for lak of clothis because of colde
So both you shulde die or lyue in necessite
If ye had not cõfort & help of me
And as for your fyne cloth & costly aray
I cannot see whi ye ought or may
Call your self noble because ye were it
which was made bi other ments labour & wit
And also your dilicate drinkis & viand
Bi other mens labours be made so pleasand
Therefore mayster marchaunt now to you I sey
I can not see but I am able & may
Lyf wythout you or your purueaunce

Lyue wythout you or your purueyaunce
For of fode & cloth I haue suffisaunce
Of my self for lyffing necessary
And now sir knyght to you I sey playnly
I see not that ye can any thyng do
For the cōmyn well or ought longyng ther to
But ech man beyng in auctoryte
Hauyng wit may do it as well as ye
Therfore to spek now of necessyte
Ther is nother of you both but ye be
In more nede than I therfore I sey playn
I am more noble than other of you twayn
Now that is a folysh reason so god me saue
For by the same reason thou woldyst haue
Eueri best fyssh & other foule than
To be more noble of birth than a man
For man hath more nede of bodely coueryng
Than they haue for they nede no thinge
The bestis haue herr & also a thik skin
The fissh skalis or shells to kepe theyr bodyes in
The foulis fethirs & so eueri thing
Bi nature hath his ꝓper couering
Saue man him self which is born all nakyd
And therfore he shuld be than most wrechyd
P ¶ Mary no man can make a better reason
For that is a sure & a trew cōclusyon
For if a child when he is furst born
were not holp & coueryd he were sone lorn
He hath no strenght to help hym neuer a dell
yet bestis haue power to help them self well
¶ So cōsideryng mans body in dede
A best is more noble & man more wrechyd
Be cause he hath nede of many mo thyngis
Than bestis haue to help of theyer lyffyngis
Also man must dayly labour & swete
To get hym sustynaunce as drynk & mete
The grownd he must dyg & the bestis kyll
For brede and mete his bodi to fyll
Grapis frutis and herbis norssh dyligently
To make good drynkis to refressh his body
But all brut bestis haue coueryng natural
Sufficyent to couer their bodyes with all
And fynd theyr fode euer on the grownd redy
with out any payn labour or study

So eueri man by reason of hys body
Is more wrechyd & in more mysery
Than bestis be / yet this not wythstandyng
Man is most noble of creaturis lyuyng
Not by hys body for that is impotent
But by hys soule beyng so excellent
For by reason of hys soule intyllectyue
He subdewyth all other bestis alyue
And cōpellyth all other bestis that be
By hys wit to releue his necessyte
But bestis haue no wyt them self to defende
Nor can get no more than god hath them send
For take any best that weryth heer
And do clyp it of bare a gayns wynter
That best hath no maner of polecy
To get other coueryng for hys body
Of cloth nor skyns nor hath no wyt
To put it vppon hym thaugh one haue made it
Nor can byld no house nor kyndyl no fyre
To warme hys body yf nede shuld requyre
But yet a man hath wyt & vnderstandyng
For to help hym self in euery such thyng
So man for his soule intellectuall
Is most noble creature of bestis all
M ¶ That is a verey good & preguant reason
yet me thynkith thou makist a degression
From the argument that we furst began
which was to ꝓue who was most gentylman
whych we disputyd I wold thou haddist hard it
P ¶ Tussh I hard what ye seyd eueri whit
R ¶ Then shew thy reason therin or thou go
P ¶ Nay be god I haue some what ells to do
I must go by me a halporth of gresse
The spokes of my cart therwith to dresse
Trow ye that I wyll leue my bysynes
For your babelyng pomp & folysshnes
Nay by sent mary I wyll not do so
For I can now to the merket goo
And for an halpeny as much gresse by
As shall cost me in our town a peny
And I tell the playnly wt out any bost
A halpeny is as well sauid as lost
M ¶ Straw for an halpeny therin is no wast
Tary with vs a while phapps thou mast

By our acquayntaunce now here get more
Than thou gatist with thy cart this monyth before
P ¶ Straw for thi councell torde a fart
Trowist I wyll gyf up my plow or cart
And folow thy folish appityte and mynde
Nay I am not yet so mad nor so blynd
For when I am at my cart or plow
I am more mezyer than other of you
I wold not chaunge my lyf nor my lyffyng
For to be made a grete lorde or a kyng
There is no ioy nor pleasure in this world here
But hyll bely fyll and make good chere
Be it prynce lozde gentilman or knaue
Hit is all the ioy that here he can haue
But these couetous and ambicious wretches
They set there myndys in honoure and ryches
So much that they be neuer content
So they lyf euer in payn and tozment
But a man that can this meanys fynd
To haue fode and cloth and a mery mynde
And to desyre no more than is nedefull
That is in this wozlde the lyf most ioyfull
¶Which lyfe in this worlde no man shall acquire
Till he subdew his infactat desyre
M ¶ I see well thou has a curst apych wit
Then yf thou wylt depart I pray the yet
Come agayn when thy bisines is doo
P ¶ For what intent now shuld I do so
M ¶ For we will in owre olde argument prosede
¶Who shulde be callyd a gentylman in dede
And we wolde be glade to here thy reason
P ¶ I wyll come agayn uppon a condicion
That ye wyll wayt uppon me both twayn
And be not out of the way when I come agayn
R ¶ We wyll not be farr hens P. then I wil not fayle
M ¶ Then I pray the let not thi pmise quaile
P ¶ Lo here is my fynger now trust me well
I will come agayn yf I haue my hele
For by god I promyse you one thyng
I am as trew of my wozde as the kyng
But if I fynde you not here then by my trough
I shall call you oppenly false knauys both
M ¶ Thou shalt fynde us trew in euery thyng
P ¶ I thynk so / except lyeng and swelyng

K Then far well for a ſeaſon a dew
Then fare ye well both I daze ſay as trew
As ſome that be tyede in newgate
M well now he is gone god ſpeed well his gate
But what ſhall we do now the meane ſeaſon
K Let us take now ſome recreacyon
And come agayn here and keep our poyntment
M Now thereto I am ryght well content
And in the meayn wyle good lord of thy grace
Preſerue all the people here in this place
Amen
Finis prime partis

¶ Secunda pars
The Plouman
P Here I may walk and wander to and fro
But I ſe not them whych I wold ſpeke to
M Yes by rode here we be both twayn
To whom thou dydyſt promys to mete here agayn
To diſpute the queſtyon that we began
whych of us coud proue hym moſt gentylman
K Thou ſeydeſt thou haddyſt our argumentes all
P ſo dyd I nother good nor ſubſtancyall
For thy folyſh and pyuyſh oppynyon
was becauſe of the grete domynyon
Of the landis and rentis wher to thou waſt boze
whych thyn auncetours had long tyme before
Thou thynkyſt thy ſelf a gentylman to be
Ant that is a folyſh reaſon ſempth ne
For when adam dolf and eue ſpan
who was then a gentylman
But then cam the chuzl and gederyd good
And ther began furſt the gentyll blood
And I thynk verely ye do beleue
That we cam all of adam and eue
Then to ſpeke by reaſon grete poſſeſſions
Make no gentylmen but gentyl condyeyons
That is the cauſe and beſt reaſon why
One ſhuld be callyd a gentylman truly
And forthermor mark well this reaſon then
If a mānis auncetours haue be gentylmen
And vertyeous and good to commyn well
That ought to be reputyd neuer adell
To the prayſe of the chylde whych doth refuſe

Such good cõdycyons & the cõtrary vse
But he ought to be dyspraylyd the more
Because hys auncestours hath shewid hym before
A precedent of gentylnes & vertew
whych good example he dothe not insew
For the gentylnes of hys blode clery
In hym doth decay & vtterly dye
So he that vsyth cõdycyons vertyous
Though that hys auncestours were vycyous
Ought not to be dyspraylyd therfore
But ought to be honoryd & praylyd the more
yet me thynkyth more honor shulde be gyvyn
To hym whych ys of noble blood & kyn
Then yf thou wylt loke honoured to be
Be cause of thy blod then mark well & see
The vylyst beggar that goth by the dore
Had ye not both one god & creature
ye cam of one furst stok & pgenye
Both of adam & eue ye wyll not denye
The beggar & thou wer both do wtles
Conseyuyd & born infylth & vnclennes
Thy blood & the beggars of one colour be
Thou art as apt to take seknes as he
yf thou be in the body woundyd
Thy flesh is as yll as his to be helyd
Alas I haue knowen many or thys
So proud of theyr byrth that all theyr lyffys
wold gyf them to no labour nor lernyng
whych brought them to mysserable endyng
That in pouerte wrechydly dyd dye
Or fallyn to theft & hangyd therfore full hye
So I sey vertew & good cõdycyons than
Is that whych makyth the very gentylman
And though the fadyr may bequeth to hys son
Hys ryches hys land & hys possessyon
yet may he nothyr gyf nor bequeth
Unto hym in no wyse after hys deth
Hys vertew nor hys gentyl cõdycyons
They can not descend as other possessyons
And yf thou wylt be a gentylman nedys
Thou must than vse vertew & gentyll dedys
why desyre men then prayse euermore
Of the actis of theyr auncestours done before
One cause ther of ys for lak of lernyng

They ꝑceyue not the reason of the thyng
Nother is be cause ther be many
That call them self gentylmen vnworthy
whych lyfe voluptuously & bestyall
And do no good in the world at all
But lyfe in pryde slouth & vnthryftynes
And be cause they haue no maner goodnes
Nor ꝑperte nor vertew in them wher by
Any man shulde thynk them any prayse worthy
Therfore they seke for cõmendacyon
Of the act⁹ that theyr auncestours haue done
Then I meruell men desyre to be callyd
Of the blode of them that excellyd
In worldly honour as kyng⁹ & empours
where some were tyrant⁹ some were cõquerours
And few desyre to be callyd of theyr blod
whych haue ben callyd Just mẽ vertyous & good
And vsyd indyfferent Justyce & equyte
Mekenes abstynens or wylfull pouerte
yf I shuld tell the the verey cause trew
It is becaus they loue no such vertew
whych vertew & gentyll cõdycyons shuld be
Longyng to gentylmen of ꝑperte
If gentyl cõdycyons be the cause lo
Then wyll I compare with both you two
For I haue vsyd euer gentyll maner
And so haue myn auncestours that before were
For furst of all when thys worlde began
Long after ther were but few people than
Men had sufficyent of euery thyng
wyth oute gret labour for fode & clothyng
All thyng was in cõmyn among them doutles
But after warde when people dyd increse
Ich man to increse hys pleasure & volupte
Of good⁹ & landes desyryd ꝑperte
wherof grete stryf & debate dyd aryse
Thẽ such as wise auncestours were that were wyse
Did studi to make laws how the people myght be
Lyfyng to gedyr in peasse & vnyte
And agayns enmitys alwey defendyd
The people that tyllyd the ground & laboryd
The people pleyuyng than theyr goodnes
Theyr gret wyt dyscressyon & gentylnes
were cõtent to gyfe them pt of the ꝑfet

Comyng of theyr landꝭ whych they dyd get
As corn catell & such thyngꝭ as they wan
But after when that coyn of money began
They chaũgid thole reuenuse & were cõtent
To gyfe them in money an ãyell rent
So for theyr good & vertteous cõdycyons
They cam furst to lãdꝭ & possellyons
So possellyons began & were furst found
Upon a good & reasonable ground
By goggꝭ swete body thou lyest falsely
All possessions began furst of tyranny
For when people began furst to encrese
Some gafe them self all to Idylnes
And wold not labour but take by vyolence
That other men gat by labour & dylygence
Than they that labouryd were fayne to gyfe
Them pt of theyr getting in peas to lyfe
Or ell for theyr landis money & porcyon
So possellyons began by extorcyon
And when such extorsyoners had oppressyd
The labouryng people than they ordeynyd
And made laws incruelous strayte & hard
That theyr heyrꝭ myght inioy it afterward
So the law of inherytaunce was furst begon
whych is a thyng agayns all good reason
That any inherytaunce in the world shuld be
That is a shamefull opynyon semyth me
For when I haue labouryd & by grete study
Gat & purchesyd landys truly
It is good reason that I haue lyberte
To gyfe thole landis to whom it lyketh me
Or ellꝭ to let them descend lynyally
To my chyld or cosyn of my blod most nye
For inherytaunce must nedys be a good thyng
Because so much good therof is predyng
Euery man to hys blod such loue doth bere
Because the land shall descend to hys heyre
He wyll byld theron & the land improw
And make corn & gralle to encrese & grow
Graft frute set trees & norysh tymber
And to increse fysh make pondys wyth water
Stok bushis & wedes whych dystroy herbage
And all baren ground beyng to tyllage
And amend the hye wayes that be ther about

And do many other good dedis no dowt
For the pfet of hys heyrys that shalbe
And for the cõmyn welth of his countre
which thyngs surely he wold neuer intend
yf the land shuld not to hys heyre descend
P By thy reason no nothyr thyng is ment
But a good dede vppon an yuell intent
when men for loue or pryd do such good dedis
The dyuell therfore shall quyt thẽ theyr medys
R whyder god or the deuyll quyt them therfore
Is now to our purpose neuer the more
For theyr myndes & intentes no man can tell
But touchyng in herytaunce thys I wot well
Much good cõmyth therof & dayli doth grow
P Nay mych Ill cõmyth therof I shall proue how
For these men that be of gret possessyons
Unto theyr blod haue such affectyons
yf any land lyke them that lyeth nye them
Of theyr pore neghbors they wyll distroy them
Or by ertort meanys they wyll them compell
The land for half the worth to them to sell
And when they lake money they wyl alwey
Euer borow & neuer wyllyng to pay
And when they shall dye ye see therpense
Few of them haue remors of cõsyens
To make any maner restytucyon
Of any land so wrongfully gotton
R Thou hast spoke sore agayns gentylmen
But what seyst thou of marchaundes then
P Many be good and worshipful also
And many charitable dedis they do
Byld churchys & amend the hye ways
Make almyshowsys & help many decays
But some be couetous & full falsely
Get theyr goodis by dysseyt & vsury
And when they haue a. M. li. in theyr cofers
They wyll rather suffer theyr neyghbers
To sterue for hunger & cold & to dye
Or they wyll gyfe to help them a peny
And yet more ouer when any of them be
Promotyd to rule or auctoryte
They dysdayn all lernyng law & reason
And Jugge all by wyll & affectyon
M Thou art but a rayler to speke so sore

Agayne gentylmen & marchaunt̄ euermore
Be not plowmen & other that dryue the cart
And such rusticall felows as thou art
Fals shrews & lyke as vycyously allo
As gentylmen of land̄ & marchaunt̄ do
R yes this vylleyn carters almost echon
Haue nother cōscyens nor deuocyon
For brybe & stele euery thyng they wyll
If they may secretly come therunto yll
And as for prayer & dyuyne seruyce
They loue them in no maner wyse
Nor neuyr wolde labour nor work do
If nede of lyfyng drove them not therto
P yet gentylmen & the rych marchaunt̄ that be
Use mych more vyce & iniquyte
M why thynkyst all marchaunt̄ & gentylmen nought
P Nay I sey not so that is not my thought
I am not yet so folysh nor so mad
For I know many good though some be bad
yet some wyll suffer hys dett̄ vnpayd tobe
And dye and leopd hys soule rather than he
wyll any of hys land̄ mynysh and empayre
That shuld after hys deth come to hys heyre
And some of them so proud be of theyre blod
And vse small vertew and doo ryall good
Butgyfe all theyre myndys and theyre study
To oppresse the pore people by tyranny
And some of them thynk thys for a curtesy
It is the most honour to them that can be
To be able for to doo extorcyon
And to mayntayn it wythout punycyon
R Bi goggis swet bodi thou art a stark knaue
Noble men and gentylmen so to depraue
P what thou proud horesō sole whō dost thou knaue
I trow thou woldist a good blowe or two haue
wyth a good whypstoke to tech the curtesy
R Auant beggerly knaue I the defye
P what wylt thou wage batteil by & by now
That shall I proue strayght I make god auowe
Et hic verberat eos
M Kepe the peace masters hold your hādys for shame
To make thys besynes ye be gretely to blame
ye wyll dysturb all thys hole company
P Nay mary it is a cause to make them mery

To walke ſuch a proude foole is but ſport & gãe
By cokkys body were not for wordly ſhame
I ſhuld cut thy fleſh or elſe ſee thy herte blode
Sir hold your tõg your wordis benothyng good
we loſe here w̃ thys lewyd altercacyon
Wych good paſtyme and recreacyon
why what better paſtyme her canſt thou haue
Then to here one to call an other knaue
And ſee ſuch a proud foole walkyd w̃ a whyp
But I loue it not therfore of felyſhyp
Leue thys brablyng and w̃ good argument
Trye the matter that is noſt cõuenyent
May I wyll trye it how ſo euer he wyll
Be it w̃ wordys or ded I wyll anſwere hym ſtyll
For be god yf he wyll not be cõtent
To be cõcludyd by good argument
I wyll cõclud hym one way or that I goo
Or I ſhall pue it on hys pate that ſhall I doo
Thow ſpekyſt lyk a clerk that hath lyttyll wyt
when a caſe is put yf he can not ſoyle it
By no maner reaſon that he can ley
Then wyll he anſwere hym thys wyſe & ſey
Beware what ye ſey ſyr now I aduyſe you
For it is treaſon or herely that ye ſpek now
To thentent to rebuke hym oppenly
Before the vnlernyd people that ſtand therby
And yf he can no colour of ſuch thyng fynd
Then wyll he wer and chafe in hys mynd
And caſt owt ſome lewd word of quarelyng
To torn the hole matter to chydyng & fyghtyng
And ſo doſt thou now lyke one that were mad
May I wold thou knewiſt thou folyſh lad
I am nother mad nor dronken yet
For myn oppynyon I haue well pupd it
By ſubſtancyall reaſon and argument
That enherytaunce is not conuenyent
And ſhewyd better reaſons than thou canſt doo
May thy reaſons may ſoone be anſwered vnto
For god defende that eſtates of enherytaunce
Shuld be dyſtroyed for by that good ordynaunce
Gentylmen of landes vndoutydly
Bryngе vp theyr chyldren full honourably
Some put to the ſcole to lerne cõnynge
To inſtruct the people in vertuous lyuynge

Some made to be actyfe in marryall ded(
Able to defend the land when nede is
And the rustycall people that haue no land
Such thyng(be not able to take in hand
wherfore yf we shuld dystroy enherytaunce
we shulde dystroy all good rule and ordynaunce
But such men as haue gret rent(and land(
And no estate but terme of theyr lyuys
And euery thyng theron wyll noryth and saue
For the grete zele & loue that they only haue
To the cõmyn welth of theyr contrey
And for god sake lo these people be they
That be worthy to haue possessyons
And such people of vertuouse condycyons
And no nother shuld be chosyn gouernours
& thei shuld haue lãd(to maintain their honours
Terme of theyr lyuys as long as they take payn
For the cõmyn welth thys is good reason playn
So that noman owght to haue any land
But such as be apt and haue chatge in hand
For the cõmyn welth as pryncys and rulers
Bysshopp(curat(prechers and techers
Jugges mynysters and other offycers
That of the cõmyn welth be executers
And valyant men of the chyualry
That be bounde to defende the people dayly
Such men as be apt to all such thyng(
Shuld haue land(to mayntayne theyr lyffyng(
So enherytaunce is not besemynge
To let them haue land(that cã do no such thyng
Nor I thynk it not reasonable nother
One man to lyf by labour of an nother
For ych man is borne to labour truly
As a byrde is to fle naturally
Nor a man ought not to haue such lyberte
To leue land(to hys chyld wher by that he
Shall lust for to lyue in slouth & gloteny
Compellyd to do nought but lyue voluptuously
There is alway good remedy for that
That is to compell them to do som what
So that ych man hauyng enherytaunce
Haue some auctoryte and gouernaunce
wherein he shulde take payne and besynes
To constrayn hym to eschew Idelnes

P Then thys grete myschef shuld folow of hit
Oft tymes they shuld rule that haue lyttyll wyt
Or disposyd to be proud & couetous
Or to lyke after theyr lustis voluptuous
which yf such men had auctoryte
Many thyngs no dowte mys orderyd shuld be
where Justyce shuld be/there wold be tyranny
where peas shuld be warr debat & enuy
So there is no good reason that I can se
To proue that any enherytaunce shuld be
R yes that shall I proue by good auctoryte
For rede in the byble and thou shalt therin see
God sayd to abraham tibi dabo
Terram hanc et semine tuo
whych is as much to say to expounde yt trew
I shall gyfe thys land to the and thyn yssew
Here is a good proue that it was goddes wyll.
That Abrahā and his blode shulde continew styl
As possessyoners and haue the gouernaunce
Of that lande as theyr propre enherytaunce
P Thou answeresst me now euen lyke a fole
As some of these fonde clarkes that go to scole
when one putteth to them a subtyll questyon
Of phylozophy to be prouyde by reason
whan they haue all theyr wyttes & reason spende
And can not tell how they parte to defende
Than they wyll aledge some auctoryte
Of the lawes or elles of deuynite
whiche in no wyse men may denye
And yet ye knowe well that of phylozophy
The pryncyples oft contraryant be
Unto the very grounds of deuynite
For the phylozophers agre here vnto
Quod mūdus fuit semper ab eterno
And deuynys quod in principio oim
Creauit deus terram et celum
But thou dydest promyse openly euen now
Onely by naturall reason to proue how
That enherytaunce ought for to be had
M By gogges body syrs I holde you bothe mad
ye be lyke some woman that I knowe well
when they wolde any matter vnto a man tell
They wyll tell .xx. talys by the way
Nothynge to purpose to the matter that they

Dyd furst in tend to tell and declare
And in lyke maner now both ye do fare
For ye dyspute now whytheyr enherytaunce
Be a resonable thyng or a good ordynaunce
whych is a matter no thyng pteynyng
To the questyon mouyd at the begynnyng
For the questyon was whych of vs all thre
Coud proue hym selfe most gentylman to be
K As touchyng that we haue all spoke & sayd
Ich man for hys pt as much as can be layd
P Nay I haue yet reasons laft wherby I can
Pue my selfe of vs all most gentylman
That nother of you both can voyde by reason
M If thou haue ought ell to say now speke on
P Then to you both answer me thys short clause
Is not gētyll cōdycyons the most pricypall cause
To make one to be a gentylman
K Paraduenture it may be so what than
paduenture qd a
Nay I shall pue that by examples many on
For musyke makyth one a musycyon
Grāmer to be good gramareon
And also geomytry a godo geometrycyon
And chorlysh condycyons a chorle for to be
And so of euery other estate & degre
And where gentyll condycyons be doutles
In any pson there is gentyllnes
Than as vertew makyth a good man
So gentyl condycyons a gentylman
M All those poynt I thynk must nedys graūtyd be
what arguyst more therof forth let vs see
P How feyst than to pryde wrath & ēnuy
K They be nought & euyll I thynk verely
P what is mekenes pacyens & charyte
K Euerychone a gentyll & good ppte
P what is couetous & lyberalyte
K The furst good the other nought for surete
P what is gloteny sloth & lechery
K They be nought all who can that deny
P what abstynens good besynes & chastyte
K Verteous & gentyll ppertees they be
P Syth ye haue graūtyd thys I shall proue playn
I am a gentylman so is none of you twayn
Furst for pryde your raymēt shewyth what ye be

For ye wyll neuer be content except that ye
Haue the fyneſt cloth & ſylke for to were
Of oryent colours & all your gere
So coſtly/your houſys gylt gloryouſly
As though ye wold therin your ſelf deyfy
ye couet euermore good(s land(s & rent
what ſo euer ye get yet neuer content
wrathfull ye be mouyd to anger anon
And enuyous dyſdaynyng euery man
And as for me I am content alwey
wyth a pore cotage & ſymple aray
I dyſdayn no man & yet pacyently
Can ſuffer to be callyd knaue and not angry
Sometyme I call hym knaue agayn in haſt
And when I haue ſayd my anger is paſt
ye haue your beddys ſo pleaſaunt & ſoft
wherein ye eaſe your ſelf to long and to oft
whych makyth your bodyes ſo tender to be
That ye can not endure labour lyke me
wyth no maner courſe fode ye wyll be fede
But wyth pleaſand wynys & moſt whyteſt brede
wyth fleſh & fyſh moſt dylycate & fat
All frut(s & ſpyces that can be gat
And when ye haue had ſuch pleaſaunt refectyons
To aſwage your carnall inſurrectyons
what ſo euer ſhe be wyfe wedow or mayde
If ſhe come in the way ſhe ſhalbe aſſayd
M Thou lieſt ſklãderours chorle for I thik of troth
P Thou vſyſt ſych vyſe more then we both
May by cokk(s body I vſe no ſych lyfe
For I am content wyth blak maud my wyfe
Trow ye ẏ I care for theſe nyſe proude primys
Theſe paityd popagays that hold vp their chynn(
And loke ſo ſnoterly as who ſay they wold
Haue euery mã woo them that doth them behold
Tote man for all ſych venereall werk
As good is the foule as the fayre in the derk
R Thou ſayſt trew / drafe is good Inough for ſwyne
P yet thou anſwereſt to no reſon of myne
R Thy reaſons all tryght well anſwere I can
For I ſey it be cõmeth a noble man
To haue rych appell & clothyng
And goodly houſys of coſtly byldyng
And that ych man accordyng to hys degre

Be knowyn from other and what they be
For yf such costly thynge weze not made
work for pore peple coud neuer be hade
And many folke than shuld fall to Idylnes
whych is the moder of vyce and wzetchydnes
P ye but I delyte noo such vanytese worldly
I delyte nother in sloth nor gloteny
I dyg and delfe & labour for my lyvyng
Neuer ydyll but somewhat euer doyng
Dayly I ren and go beze swete & swynk
I ete broun bzede and drynk small drynk
Content wt cours meat what so euer it be
so it quench the hunger it suffysyth me
These poyntes I use whych I haue reherisyd now
Be not these gentyl condycyons I pray you
M Jf thou use them nede compellyth the theyto
For if thou coudist hardli thou wold other wise do
P what I wold doo then ye can not tell
Jt is not to purpose but thys I wot well
Syth that I use my lyfe in such good maner
whyth such gentyll condycyons explysyd here
More than ye both do styll contynuyng
And syth that gentyll condycyons is the thyng
To make a gentylman the cause pryncypall
whezin I vse my life most of vs all
who can by any reason deny than
But that I am of us all most gentylman
K Jn feyth yf thou be gentylman therfore
Thou art a gentylman agaynt thy wyll full sore
M Syth I se he stadyth in his own cõsait so well
That opynyon we shall neuer expell
From hym by no argument nor reason
Therfore now for a lytyll season
Let vs dept from hym I hold it best
Then we shall haue wt hym some rest
K I agre therto for caton sayth this
Contra vezbolas noli cotendere verbis
Contend nor argu neuer in no matter
wt hym that is full of wozds and clatter
M wherefoze for a season let us both dept
K I am agreid therto wt all myn hart
P why sirs than wyll ye dept & be gon
M ye that we wyll fazewel for a season
For to tarzy here lenger we see no grete cause

Et exeant

Then fare ye well as wyfe as two dawys
And I pray god fende you fuch grace both twayn
To be ſtark cockeolde or ye come agayn
Now maſters they be both gone away
Therefore one worde now harke what I ſey
wee ſee well now by playne expience
when a man is ſet in a wyllfull credens
All to fortefye hys owne oppynyon
If god hym ſelfe than wold wyth hym reaſon
In effect it ſhall no more auayle
Than w' a whyp to dryfe a ſnayle
Therfore no remedy is that I can ſee
For yuell men that be in auctoryte
But let them alone tyll god wyll ſend
A tyme tyll our gouernours may intend
of all enormytes the reformacyon
And bring in theyr handis the rod of correccyon
And the reformyng of iniurys them ſelf ſee
And wyll ſay p̄cyſely thus it ſhall be
For exortacyons techyng and p̄chyng
Geſtyng and raylyng they mend no thyng
For the amendement of the world is not in me
Nor all the grete arguments that we thre
Haue made ſyth we reſonyd here to gedyr
Do not p̄uayle the weyght of a fether
For the helpyng of any thyng that is amys
we can not help it then ſyth it ſo is
I wyll let the world wagg & home wyll I goo
And dryf the plowgh as I was wont to do
And praye god ſend us peas I wyl no farr mell
Therfore maſteys all now fare ye well

Hic miles & merrator iteꝝm intrant

K Now by my troth I am glad that he is gon
M And ſo am I by ſwete ſeynt John
I hard not a chorll thys ſeuyn yeꝛe
Shew ſo curſt reaſons as he hath done here
For the mayntenaunce of hys oppynyon
yet he hys dyſſeuyd for all hys reaſon
For it is neceſſary that ruleꝛs be
To haue poſſeyons to mayntayn theyr degre
And thoſe few to dryfe the multytude all
of the other people to labour to fall
For yf the rulers drof them not theꝛto
The peple wold be ydyll & nothyng doo

And moſt reaſon is that gouernaunce
Shuld come to ſuch rulers by inherytaunce
Rather than to haue them chole by electyon
Oft tymys by dzede mede and affectyon
Men of euyll conſcyens that grete tyraunts be
Rede old cronycles the proue ye ſhall ſee
And though they haue grete wyt and lernyng
Yet ſo proud they be therof they fere nothyng
Nother god nor man but euermore ſtyll
wt out councell or aduyſe folow theyr own wyll
But they that by inherytaunce rulers be
Though they haue no grete lernyng yet we ſee
yet makyth them more fezefull & better cõtent
To folow wyſe mens councell and aduyſement
And ſyth that yt hath ben ſo long cõtynnyd
Enherytours to haue rule and ſo long uſyd
And that they haue ruled by as dyſcrellyon
As the other that haue be chole by electyon
If that ordez of rule by ſucceſſyon of blode
Shuld be dyſtroyd it ſhuld doo hurte & no good
M That reaſon is ſo gzete no man can debarr
Neuertheles that churllyſh knaue that cazter
After hys fond oppynyon thynkyth thus
Hymſelfe more gentylman than us
R And therin he lyeth for by expiens we ſee
That gentyll cõdycyons moſt comenly be
In them that be of noble blode borne
For take .xx. cazters whych neuer were beforne
Aquayntyd let them be to gyder
Take .xx. ſtraynge gentylmen in lyke maner
Theſe churlyſh carters I dare well ſay
wyll not agre to gyder ſkant one day
wt out chydyng quarzellyng or fyghtyng
ychone wyll ſtele from other and be pykyng
And ſtryfe whych of them at the ſkot ſhall pay leſt
And indeuer them who can play the knaue beſt
But theſe gentylmen I warant you wyll ſtudy
who can ſhew to other moſt cuytely
And of theyr gentylnes wyll yfer to pay
For the other and ſhew what pleaſurs they may
So touchyng gentylnes I ſay ſuzely
M Men of grete byrth vſe it moſt comynly
There can be no truer ſaying nor ſentence
And the cauſe therof we ſee by expience

For these pore wretches that haue no thyng
Must be nygardys churlych and spayryng
But gentylmen be taught to be lyberall
And so they may be for they haue where w' all
K And as touchyng noblenes that argument
whych the plowman made late puyth euydent
That gentylmen borne to land must nedys be
For suffyency of most nobylyte
For besyde goddys gyfts of grace & of nature
As wyt and bodely stryngh yet they be sure
Of other ryches as of land and rent
To auoyd nede so they be more suffycyent
of them self than other pore people doutles
Then yf nede of shaunge helpe cause wrechydnes
And suffysauns be cause wrechydnes
M A better reason no man can deuyse
And yet farther I thynk lykewyse
Ye that hath grete haboundance of ryches
May vse lyberalyte and gentylnes
And also it is euer necessary
That some lyse in welth and some in mysery
And let churlys bable and say what they wyll
Hit hath ben so euer and wyll be so styll
For it is almyghty goddys purueaunce
wyse men of folys to haue the gouernaunce
And they that rule well I beseech Jhesu
Send them good lyse & long to contynew
Amen.

The Philosopher

ye sofereygns all discrete & excellent
Before whom thys dyalog shewyd hath be
Touchyng iij. poynts by wey of argument
Furst what is gentylnes & what nobylyte
And who shulde be chose to hye auctoryte
Thys questyons they be so hye and sottell
Few dare plume to dyffyne them well

¶ Yet I thynk now vnder your correccyons
The thyng that makyth a gentylman to be
ys but vertew & gentyll condyccyons
whych aswell in pore men oft tymys we se
As in men of grete byrth or hye degre
And also vycious & churlyssh cõdyccyons
May be in men born to grete possessyons
¶ And forther as touchyng nobylyte
yet standyth mych yt I thynk doutles
In suffycyencye reason doth agre
But that suffysaunce makyng noblenes
Must nedys be ãnexid vnto goodnes
For suffysauns is not the cause pryncypall
That god his noble but hys goodnes wythall
¶ So vertue is euer the thyng pryncypall
That gentylnes & noblenes doth inslue
Then these hedys rulers & gouernours all
Shuld come therto be cause of theyr vertue
And in auctoryte they ought not contynue
Except they be good men dyscrete & wyse
And haue a loue & zele vnto Justyce
¶ Wherfore souereyns all that here present be
Now marke well these reasons here brought in
Both agayns men of hye & of low degre
For thys intent only to rebuke syn
For the best wey that is for one to be gyn
To cõuert the people by exortacyon
ys to pswade them by naturall reason
¶ For when that a man by hys owne reason
Juggyth hym selfe for to offend
That grudgyth his cõscyens & gyffyth cõpunccyon
In to hys herte to cause hym amend
But such blynd best that wyl not intend
To here no good councell nor reason
Ought by the law to haue sharp correccyon
¶ But then yf the laws be not suffycyent
whych haue be made & ordeynyd before
To gyfe ther fore cõdygne ponyshment
The pryncys & gouernours be bound euermore
To cause new laws to be made therfore
And to put such men in auctoryte
That good men Just & indyfferent be
¶ But because that men of nature euermore
Be traple & folowyng sensualyte

yt is impossyble in a man. Therfore
For any gouernours that be in auctoryte
At all tymys Iust & indyfferent to be
Except they be brydelyd & therto compellyd
By some strayt lawes for them deuysyd
¶As thus that no man such rome occupye
But certayn yerys & than to be remouyd
yet that whyle bound to attend dylygently
And yf he offend & surely prouyd
wyth out any fauour that he be ponyshyd
For the ponyshment of a Iuge or officer
Doth more good than of thousand other
¶And beyll that such orders be deuysyd
Substauncyally/and put in execucyon
Loke neuer to see the world amended
Nor of the gret mysches the reformacion
But they that be bounde to see the thyngs done
I pray god of his grace put in theyr myndys
To reforme shortly suche thynges amys
¶And though that I my selfe now prase
Thus myn oppynyon haue publyshed
Or any of my felowes here in this place
In any poynt here haue vs abused
We beseche you to holde vs excused
And so the auctour hereof requyreth you all
And thus I cõmyt you to god eternall.

A M E N.

Johēs rastell me fieri fecit

Cum priuilegio regali.